

## CLAIMS

We claim:

- 5 1. A method for creating a timed reminder linked to a document, comprising:
  - opening a document in an application program;
  - indicating that the document is to be accessed at a later date;
  - in response to indicating that the document is to be accessed at a
  - 10 later date, creating a reminder having a date field, a time field, and a document field;
  - setting a date in the date field for accessing the document;
  - setting a time in the time field for accessing the document;
  - setting the name of the document in the document field; and
  - 15 storing the reminder in a shared database that supports timed reminders linked to documents associated with a plurality of application programs.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the document is a word-
- 20 processor compatible file.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the document is a spreadsheet.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the document is a graphical file.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the document is a computer-executable file other than an electronic mail message.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the application program is  
5 chosen from the group consisting of a word processor, a spreadsheet application, and a graphics application.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the document is of a type not associated with the application program.

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8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
at the date and time specified in the date field and time field,  
retrieving the reminder from the database; and  
displaying the reminder along with the name of the associated  
15 document.

9. A computer-readable medium storing instructions which, when executed, perform the method of claim 8.

10. A method for displaying a document associated with a scheduled reminder, comprising:

polling a database from a first application;

5 determining whether a reminder is present in the database with a time field matching the current time and a date field matching the current date;

in response to determining that a reminder is present in the database with a time field matching the current time and a date field matching the current date, retrieving the reminder;

10 displaying the reminder on a display screen;

retrieving a document associated with the reminder; and

displaying the associated document in a second application.

11. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

15 determining whether an application capable of polling the database is active;

in the event that an application capable of polling the database is not active, activating a background program dedicated to polling the database; and

20 setting the background program as the active application.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

determining that the associated document is incompatible with the active application;

in response to determining that the associated document is incompatible with the second application, activating a third application capable of displaying the associated document; and  
displaying the associated document in the third application.

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13. A computer-readable medium storing instructions which, when executed, perform the method of claim 8.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

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determining that the reminder has been designated as auto-updating;

in response to determining that the reminder has been designated as auto-updating, initiating a series of changes to the document;

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storing the document;

incrementing the time field and date field of the reminder by a set amount; and

storing the incremented reminder in the database.

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15. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

determining that the associated document is a hyperlink to a web page; and

displaying the web page in a web browser.

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16. A computer-implemented method for providing a timed reminder and associated file to a user, comprising the steps of:

creating a timed reminder having a time entry and date entry;

adding an associated file name to the timed reminder;

5 storing the timed reminder in a shared database;

determining whether a checking application is active;

in response to determining that a checking application is active,  
periodically comparing the current time and date with the time entry  
and the date entry;

10 in the event that the current time and date match the time entry  
and date entry, retrieving the timed reminder; and

displaying the timed reminder and the associated file name on a  
display screen;

otherwise, activating a background checking program;

15 periodically comparing the current time and date with the time  
entry and the date entry;

in the event that the current time and date match the time entry  
and date entry, retrieving the timed reminder; and

20 displaying the timed reminder and the associated file name on a  
display screen.

17. A computer-readable medium storing instructions which, when  
executed, performs the method of claim 16.

25 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the shared database supports  
timed reminders linked to documents associated with a plurality of

application programs and may be accessed by more than one application.